

## Message Text

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NODIS  
CAPE TOWN FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652:GDS

TAGS: MNUC, PARM, SF

SUBJECT: SOUTH AFRICAN NUCLEAR PROBLEM

REF: (A) LAGOS 3789, (B) USUN 1064, (C) STATE 77914

1. SEPTTEL CONTAINS TEXT OF BRIEFING PAPER AND TALKING  
POINTS WHICH DEPARTMENT HAS PREPARED FOR THE PRESIDENT'S  
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USE IN LAGOS. FOLLOWING ARE POINTS WHICH AMBASSADOR MAY  
DRAW UPON IF A MORE DETAILED FOLLOW-UP BRIEFING OF FMG  
ON OUR EFFORTS WITH SOUTH AFRICA IS REQUIRED. IN PRE-  
SENTING BRIEFING, YOU SHOULD STRESS CONFIDENTIALITY OF  
THIS INFORMATION.

A. FMG WILL RECALL THAT FOLLOWING PUBLICITY EARLY LAST

AUGUST CONCERNING A SUSPECTED NUCLEAR WEAPONS TEST SITE IN THE KALAHARI DESERT, US MADE FIRM REPRESENTATIONS IN PRETORIA. AS A RESULT, SOUTH AFRICAN AUTHORITIES PROVIDED US AND SUBSEQUENTLY MADE PUBLIC THREE ASSURANCES: THAT SOUTH AFRICA DID NOT HAVE, NOR DID IT INTEND TO DEVELOP, A NUCLEAR EXPLOSIVE DEVICE FOR ANY PURPOSE PEACEFUL OR OTHERWISE; THAT THE SO-CALLED KALAHARI FACILITY WAS NOT A TESTING GROUND FOR NUCLEAR EXPLOSIONS; AND THAT THERE WOULD NOT BE ANY NUCLEAR EXPLOSIVE TESTING OF ANY KIND IN SOUTH AFRICA.

B. IN SEPTEMBER 1977 THE USG PRESENTED A FURTHER DEMARCHE TO THE SAG, WELCOMING THE THREE ASSURANCES GIVEN BY PRIME MINISTER VORSTER IN AUGUST AS A GOOD BEGINNING BUT URGING SOUTH AFRICA TO MAKE A PROMPT PUBLIC STATEMENT OF ITS INTENT TO ADHERE TO THE NPT AND TO ARRANGE FOR INTERIM INTERNATIONAL SAFEGUARDS AT THE VALINDABA ENRICHMENT PLANT. WE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT THE US WOULD VIEW WITH THE UTMOST GRAVITY ANY ACTIVITY INCONSISTENT WITH THE ASSURANCES GIVEN BY SOUTH AFRICA. WE INDICATED THAT IF THE SAG TOOK THE ACTIONS WE URGED, THE RESULTING CIRCUMSTANCES WOULD PERMIT THE US TO SUPPLY LOW ENRICHED URANIUM FUEL FOR THE NUCLEAR POWER REACTORS UNDER CONSTRUCTION BY FRANCE AT KOEBERG. FINALLY, WE STATED THAT IN THE PRESENT CIRCUMSTANCES THE US COULD NOT SUPPLY HIGHLY ENRICHED URANIUM FUEL FOR THE SAFARI RESEARCH REACTOR IN SOUTH AFRICA.

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C. IN ITS OCTOBER RESPONSE TO THIS DEMARCHE, THE SAG ASKED FOR IN-DEPTH DISCUSSIONS WITH THE US ON THE POINTS RAISED IN OUR DEMARCHE AND OTHER RELATED ISSUES, INDICATING THAT A MAJOR STEP COULD THEREBY BE TAKEN TOWARDS OPENING THE WAY FOR SOUTH AFRICA'S ADHERENCE TO THE NPT. THE RESPONSE MADE CLEAR THAT ITS ABILITY TO RELY ON US ASSURANCES OF FUEL SUPPLY WOULD BE A SIGNIFICANT ELEMENT IN THE SAG'S DECISION ON WHETHER TO ACCEPT THE CONDITIONS SET FORTH IN THE SEPTEMBER DEMARCHE. THE US RESPONDED THAT IT WAS PREPARED TO ENGAGE IN HIGH LEVEL NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE SAG, BUT ONLY IF SUCH NEGOTIATIONS WERE FORESEEN BY BOTH SIDES AS A STEP LEADING TO RESOLUTION OF THE NUCLEAR ISSUE. SUBSEQUENTLY SENIOR SOUTH AFRICAN OFFICIALS INDICATED THAT A DECISION TO ADHERE TO THE NPT WOULD NOT BE DIFFICULT ONCE THE SAG WERE SATISFIED ON THREE ISSUES:

-- HOW SOUTH AFRICA COULD BE ASSURED OF LONG TERM FUEL SUPPLY FOR KOEBERG IN ACCORDANCE WITH EXISTING CONTRACTS, ONCE US CONDITIONS HAD BEEN MET;

-- WHETHER THE US WOULD ALSO BE PREPARED TO CONTINUE

FUELING THE SAFARI RESEARCH REACTOR;

-- HOW US INSISTENCE ON INTERIM SAFEGUARDS AT VALINDABA  
COULD BE RECONCILED WITH SOUTH AFRICA'S NEED TO PROTECT  
PROPRIETARY INFORMATION ABOUT ITS ENRICHMENT TECHNOLOGY.

D. IN FEBRUARY A SMALL US TEAM VISITED SOUTH AFRICA TO  
RESPOND AT THE TECHNICAL LEVEL TO THESE THREE CONCERNS,  
ALONG THE FOLLOWING LINES:

-- ON SUPPLY OF FUEL FOR KOEBERG WE EXPLAINED THAT THE NEW

US NON-PROLIFERATION LEGISLATION SETS FORTH STRICT PRO-  
CEDURES AND SAFEGUARD REQUIREMENTS GOVERNING LICENSING  
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OF US EXPORTS OF NUCLEAR MATERIALS FOR PEACEFUL PURPOSES.  
WE INDICATED THAT WE WOULD BE PREPARED TO DISCUSS THE  
ISSUE OF FUEL SUPPLY ASSURANCE AT THE POLITICAL LEVEL IF  
SUCH FOLLOW-ON DISCUSSIONS ABOUT SAFEGUARDS SEEMED  
APPROPRIATE.

-- ON SAFARI FUEL, WE INDICATED THAT THE US WOULD NOT BE  
PREPARED TO CONTINUE ON A LONG-TERM BASIS TO SUPPLY HIGHLY  
ENRICHED URANIUM TO SOUTH AFRICA FOR ANY PURPOSE (NOTWITH-  
STANDING THE FACT THAT SAFARI IS UNDER IAEA SAFEGUARDS)  
BUT THAT IF OUR CONDITIONS WERE MET WE WOULD BE PREPARED  
TO SUPPLY SAFARI WITH LOWER ENRICHED FUEL AS SOON AS IT  
BECAME AVAILABLE AND, ULTIMATELY, WITH LOW ENRICHED FUEL.  
FOR TACTICAL PURPOSES, WE DID NOT EXCLUDE THE POSSIBILITY  
OF SUPPLYING EXTREMELY SMALL AMOUNTS OF HIGHLY ENRICHED  
URANIUM FOR A LIMITED PERIOD SUFFICIENT ONLY TO PREVENT  
THE SHUTDOWN OF THE SAFARI REACTOR BEFORE ALTERNATIVE FUEL  
COULD BE FABRICATED.

-- ON THE QUESTION OF INTERIM SAFEGUARDS FOR VALINDABA, WE  
PROPOSED A RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM FOR ENRICHMENT  
PLANT SAFEGUARDS WHICH COULD BE UNDERTAKEN BY THE IAEA  
AND THE SAG, WITH TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FROM THE US, WHICH  
COULD BE INSTITUTED AT AN EARLY DATE AND WHICH WOULD  
HAVE THE OBJECTIVE OF EFFECTIVELY SAFEGUARDING THE ENRICH-  
MENT PLANT WHILE PROTECTING PROPRIETARY PROCESS INFORMA-  
TION.

E. CURRENTLY, THE SAG IS CONSIDERING THESE PROPOSALS  
AT THE POLITICAL LEVEL AND WE EXPECT A RESPONSE IN THE  
NEXT FEW WEEKS. WE WILL BE BETTER ABLE TO TELL AT THAT  
TIME WHETHER THESE PROPOSALS CAN LEAD TO FURTHER US-SAG  
NEGOTIATIONS WITH A VIEW TO RESOLVING THE NUCLEAR PROBLEM  
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ON THE BASIS OF THE CONDITIONS SET FORTH IN OUR SEPTEMBER DEMARCHE.

2. FOLLOWING ADDITIONAL POINTS MAY BE DRAWN UPON AS APPROPRIATE TO UNDERSCORE OUR HOPE THAT THE GON WILL USE ITS INFLUENCE TO AVERT PRECIPITATE ACTION IN THE UNSC:

A. IT IS CLEAR TO US THAT, IF FORCED TO DO SO, SOUTH AFRICA CAN SUSTAIN A NUCLEAR PROGRAM WITHOUT COOPERATION FROM FOREIGN SUPPLIERS. ON THE OTHER HAND, WE BELIEVE THAT CONTINUATION OF SUCH COOPERATION, BY THE US AND OTHER WESTERN NATIONS, COULD BE A MAJOR INCENTIVE TO SOUTH AFRICA TO ESCHEW PROGRAMS WHICH COULD LEAD TO NUCLEAR

WEAPONS DEVELOPMENT. MOREOVER, NUCLEAR COOPERATION UNDER APPROPRIATE INTERNATIONAL SAFEGUARDS AND CONTROLS DOES NOT CONTRIBUTE TO THE PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND NEED NOT ENHANCE NATIONAL CAPABILITIES TO ACHIEVE A NUCLEAR EXPLOSIVES STATUS.

B. WE MUST NOT LOSE SIGHT OF THE FACT THAT OUR COMMON OBJECTIVE SHOULD BE A SOUTH AFRICAN NUCLEAR PROGRAM ORIENTED TO PEACEFUL PURPOSES. DENIAL OF COOPERATION CAN DO NOTHING TO PREVENT THE RISK THAT SOUTH AFRICA COULD DEVELOP NUCLEAR WEAPONS, AND MIGHT WELL PRECIPITATE A NATIONAL DECISION TO MOVE IN THAT DIRECTION.

C. WE ARE NOW AT A CRITICAL JUNCTURE IN THE PROCESS OF MAINTAINING WITH THE SAG A DIALOGUE THE IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVE OF WHICH IS SOUTH AFRICA'S FORMAL COMMITMENT TO ADHERE TO THE NPT AND TO ESTABLISH INTERNATIONAL SAFEGUARDS ON ALL ITS NUCLEAR FACILITIES. BY ATTAINING THESE OBJECTIVES, WE COULD MATERIALLY REDUCE THE PROLIFERATION RISK IN SOUTH AFRICA AND RESTORE REGIONAL AND BROADER INTERNATIONAL CONFIDENCE CONCERNING SOUTH AFRICA'S NUCLEAR INTENTIONS.

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D. MEANWHILE, WE ARE CAREFULLY WATCHING DEVELOPMENTS IN SOUTH AFRICA. WE HAVE NO INFORMATION TO INDICATE THAT SOUTH AFRICA IS PREPARING TO TEST A NUCLEAR DEVICE, OR THAT SOUTH AFRICA IS ACTING IN ANY WAY CONTRARY TO ITS AUGUST ASSURANCES.

E. UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES, WE FIRMLY BELIEVE THAT NO USEFUL PURPOSE COULD BE SERVED AT THIS TIME THROUGH REINTRODUCTION OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN NUCLEAR ISSUE IN THE UNITED NATIONS. WE HOPE THEREFORE THAT THE GON CAN USE ITS CONSIDERABLE INFLUENCE IN THAT FORUM SO THAT THE DIPLOMATIC PROCESS IS GIVEN TIME TO BEAR FRUIT.

F. WE DO NOT RULE OUT RECOURSE TO THE UN OR ANY OTHER APPROPRIATE ACTION TO ADDRESS THE SOUTH AFRICAN NUCLEAR PROBLEM, IF IT DEVELOPS THAT A RESOLUTION OF THE PROBLEM THROUGH NEGOTIATION IS NOT POSSIBLE. WE WILL KEEP THE GON AND OTHER INTERESTED GOVERNMENTS INFORMED OF DEVELOPMENTS IN OUR DISCUSSIONS WITH THE SAG. SIMILARLY, WE WOULD WELCOME THE OPPORTUNITY TO EXCHANGE VIEWS WITH THE GON IN ADVANCE OF ITS TAKING ANY ACTION IN THE UN.

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